

Hi Parents & Students,

Welcome to math with Ms. Sysko! I'm really excited that our year together is beginning. There are some math class things I want you and your child to be aware of that will be different from math in previous years.

Math class is approximately 86 minutes every day, just like last year. Of this time, around 60 minutes will be dedicated to our lesson, practice and homework. The remaining time will be for students to work in various stations (3 days per week) and Compass Learning (2 days per week). The stations will include review work, enrichment and reteach. The reteach station is one students will be assigned to as needed (I'll explain that in a bit). Compass Learning is a computer-based program that places each student into the skills he/she needs work on according to his/her MAP score.

We will begin class each day with a jumpstart--a few problems dealing with current or review topics. Most of these will be emailed daily to the students to complete via Google Forms, but some will be old-school paper and pencil! Each week, students will be required to complete a rich task. This will be a multi-step story problem relevant to our current math topics or possibly review topics. Students will receive this problem on Monday, and it will be due on Friday (during a typical week). Rich tasks will rotate mostly between 2 and 4 squares, but may vary as well to include PEEL paragraphs or other work. These will be available weekly (with current problem) via your child's Google Classroom page. Blank 2 and 4 squares with grading rubric will be available all year in Google Classroom.

Students will not have textbooks for math. Instead, they will receive packets electronically for each unit and handouts as we move through each unit. The unit packets will be available via your child's Google Classroom page, so paper copies can be printed at your child's discretion. Students will be expected to take notes in class, keep track of handouts and keep *all returned materials while we work through a unit*. These materials should be organized in their math binder, which we will set up in the first couple days of school.

It is expected that each student have a calculator for math this year. However, this does not take the place of a student showing his/her work on assignments. Work will be required for problems as points are given for work. Students will always be told which problems must be accompanied by work.

Homework is going to be a BIG change this year. All daily work assignments (*not rich tasks or jumpstarts*) are going to be somewhat optional for your child. Any daily assignment given will earn two grades--one for completion and one for accuracy. Completion grades will be a total of 2 points per assignment & will follow this grading scale:

- 2 = completed $\frac{1}{2}$ or more of the assigned problems
- 1 = completed between 1 problem up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the assigned problems
- 0 = did not complete any of the assigned problems*

Students will NOT receive a late assignment or work toward a demerit since they will receive a 0 for completion; however, students can check themselves into LSH and receive 1 point back if they turn the work in immediately after LSH.

In grading for accuracy, those grades will all be 10 points. To figure this grade, students will take the number of correct problems divided by total completed problems, then multiply that by 10. If a student chooses not to do any work on an assignment after 2 school days, he/she will also receive a 0 for accuracy, as well as completion.

Students can do corrections on **most all** dependent work (including rich tasks) to earn back $\frac{1}{2}$ point per accurately corrected problem. Corrections will not be accepted without work. This is a great opportunity to make fixes to any misunderstandings throughout our lessons. Obviously, the sooner the student does the corrections, the better it is for him/her. *Corrections will not be accepted once a unit has been completed.* I will let students know which assignments cannot be corrected, but that should be few and far between. Any points earned will be figured into the accuracy grade; students cannot do additional problems to earn points.

A majority of a student's grade is going to be determined by independent work, also known as assessments. When we have a homework assignment, the following day we will have an assessment. This will most often be a quiz of around 5-10 questions, depending upon the topic. Sometimes these could be via an online program, but mostly the quizzes will be paper and pencil. Any quiz not passed will land a student in the review station for that material. After the review station, students will have a chance to retake a similar quiz. The two grades will be averaged and that grade will go into the grade book. If a student is not happy with his/her quiz score, but did not score low enough to be in the reteach group, he/she can meet with me to go over the mistakes. We will then schedule a time for a retake. The grades will be averaged.

For unit tests, students will be able to retake portions of the test they did not do well on; students will not be allowed however to retake an entire unit test. A new test grade will be figured by averaging the retake portions with the originals. All tests are worth 100 points.

I will be using the following grading categories and weights:

- jumpstart/rich task/stations 10%
- dependent work: completion 5%
- dependent work: accuracy 10%
- independent work 75% (tests, quizzes, assessments)

I try to keep my presence online up-to-date each week via my Google Classroom pages and sometimes TeacherEase's digital locker. Any handouts and packets that I am able to put online, I will.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I know this is a lot of information, and some of this is really different than what you might be used to. I can be reached via email (syskomollie@gusd120.k12.il.us), by phone (815-777-2413 ext 2108) or feel free to stop in for a visit!

Here's to a great year! :)

Ms. Mollie Sysko